A DESCRIPTION OF CERTAIN OBJECTS OF UNKNOWN SIGNIFICANCE, FORMERLY USED BY SOME NEW SOUTH WALES TRIBES.

By Walter R. Harper.

(Communicated by R. T. Baker, F.L.S.)

(Plates xii.-xviii.)

My opening duty in this paper must be to gratefully acknowledge the assistance I have had in its preparation. I am indeed indebted to Professor W. Baldwin Spencer, of Melbourne University, who not only sent me his own specimen and procured me others, but also it was by his advice that I greatly extended my researches, and can now offer descriptions of nine of these curious objects instead of two. To the Trustees of the Australian Museum I owe four of the stones, and Mr. R. Etheridge (Curator of the Museum) assisted me most generously. Mr. R. T. Baker (Curator of Technological Museum), in addition to lending me his two specimens, also figured for me one sent from Adelaide. Dr. Stirling (Curator of South Australian Museum) sent me, through Professor Spencer, the two specimens in his collection; and Dr. Cooksey (Mineralogist of Australian Museum) was kind enough to examine some of the stones, and give me his opinion as to their composition, and the causes of wear present upon them.

However, in spite of all this assistance, I regret to say I have been unable to discover satisfactory reasons for their existence. A number of theories have been put forward concerning their uses, the principal of which will be examined later; but, as none of these are based on facts, or have any unquestionable proofs in support of—but, on the contrary, many objections to—them, these must still remain theories and the real use a mystery In the hope of assisting in the solution of the mystery this paper is written.

The principal difficulty in arriving at any conclusion as to the use of these "stones" (I call them "stones" for convenience, although some are composed of clay and some of slate) lies in the fact that we have practically no detailed record of their discovery, no note of any enquiries made on the spot or amongst the surrounding aboriginal tribes.

They have been found on, or some feet below, the surface, and sent to the present owners—sometimes with a suggestion as to their use, *e.g*, "Ceremonial stone" in the case of No. 2, "Tomb-stone" in the case of No. 7, and "Record of the Dead" in the case of No. 1. But these are merely conjectures, not the results of strict investigation, and proofs must be forthcoming before we can accept them.

None of these objects have been found within 300 miles of the eastern coast, but otherwise they were distributed over a very wide area of western New South Wales. Some have been found on the Lachlan, others west of the Darling, and one on the Barcoo in Eastern Central Australia In shape the marked specimens (and it is of these I am speaking more particularly) resemble nothing so much as—to use a vulgar comparison—enormous cigars. Just as various brands of cigars differ somewhat in shape, so do these "stones," but no more.

The process of manufacture seems to have been the same in every case. A block of clay, slate, or sandstone has been roughly hewn near to the desired shape, and then smoothed and finished with a piece of some harder material. The circular cavity at the base has possibly been made by rubbing a pebble round and round. Some difference of opinion exists as to No. 7. It has been suggested that this specimen was moulded from damp clay, and not cut out of a solid block. This may be so, but as the use of the objects is evidently not determined by their composition I did not think it necessary to have an analysis made.

The markings, although apparently all derived from two main types, are very unequal in size, depth and length They have probably all been made with a sharp flake of quartz, but of course a piece of hoop-iron or steel would make similar marks.

The two principal designs, if such they can be called, are a gash and a mark very like the well-known "broad-arrow." The gashes are sometimes long and deep, sometimes short and faint; they run either perpendicular or else parallel to the base.

The "broad-arrows" (I shall use this term, although probably these markings had quite another significance) have been made by three cuts. Occasionally only one barb appears, and I shall speak of these as "incomplete arrows." And, again, the barbs are sometimes continued so as to cross each other—these I shall call "cross-barbed arrows."

The gashes appear in pairs, in groups of three, four, and so on to beyond a score, one under the other or ranged side by side.

The appended diagrammatic sketches of the markings (Pl. XIII., figs. 1-2) on the most elaborately carved specimen (No. 1) will give an idea of their general character and distribution throughout the series. One also shows a star-like ornament, formed, I believe, by three "arrows" meeting, peculiar to this specimen

The question at once arises: "Are these markings symbolical or are they decorative?"

If it could be said that they all have a certain significance, and that arranged thus they conveyed to the initiated a certain meaning, we would have gone far in determining the use of the "stones." For my part I am inclined to think they are merely decorative. The marks I have called "broad-arrows" may be imitations of emu tracks. I rather think they are; but we are not therefore justified in saying they are symbolical of the emu.

Similar gashes are repeated a certain number of times, but repetition is the most noticeable feature of aboriginal decorative art. I shall refer to this matter again later, and will now proceed with the descriptions.

No. 1 (Plate XII.) is in the possession of Professor W. Baldwin Spencer, of Melbourne University. It is composed of slate, oval in section, and gradually tapering to a blunt apex. The greatest circumference, taken a little above the base, is 18·4 cm., and the diameters of the base are 5 cm. and 3·8 cm.

Many marks, gashes and scratches, representative of all the varieties of decorations met with in the series, are scattered profusely over its surface, as shown on the rough sketches (Pl. XIII.) The base, with the exception of a ring round the edge of 4 mm. in width, has been hollowed out to a depth of about 6 mm. in the centre, and this concave portion is traversed by four faintly marked ridges.

The most noticeable of the markings are a clearly cut "broad-arrow" near the top, four perpendicular and parallel lines a little lower down, and a group of three "broad-arrows," joined at their points in the form of a star, near the foot. In addition to these, on the opposite side of the object, there are a number of "broad-arrows" and horizontal and oblique scratches. On this stone, as well as on No. 6, there are several marks which have the appearance of incomplete arrows, the barb being cut on one side only. However, judging from the frequency with which this design occurs, the omission was intentional. All the marks are distinctly defined, and nowhere, on the decorated surface of the stone, is there an indication of its having been rubbed or rolled over any hard or resisting substances. In fact the only wear this part of the object has been subjected to is such as might be caused by continual handling. The same must be said of the base. The apex of the "stone" has been fractured, apparently in process of manufacture, but the foot has been chipped, in all probability, since the markings were put on. It must be remembered that it is the foot and *not the base* of the object which exhibits these traces of, comparatively speaking, rough usage; the base is quite smooth and even, with the exception of the four decorative ridges previously referred to, and the rim of the concavity shows no signs of the wear noticeable on the outside edge of the ring.

No. 2 (Pl. XIV. fig. 1) is in the South Australian Museum, Adelaide, and was discovered at Kanowna in the Barcoo District. It is composed of slate, and its height, 55 8 c.m , is greater than that of any other stone in the series. It differs also in form, for, while the remaining eight stones are symmetrically rounded, this specimen is almost rectangular in its lower half, and in its upper

part still rectangular, but very uneven, owing to a rather large piece having been chipped out of the apex on one side, and to fractures extending from the apex down for about 8 cm. (greatest) along one corner of this side. These fractures, excepting perhaps that at the apex, were probably caused after the completion of the stone, since the markings present on the uninjured edges extend to within 3 cm. of the top, whereas they have here been obliterated down to about 8 cm. It is worthy of notice that the gashes immediately underneath this fracture, and extending across the flat surface of the stone at right angles to it, are as clearly and as sharply defined as anywhere else on the specimen. The stone is asymmetrical in shape, and although, with the exceptions indicated, the surface is smooth, it is very irregular in contour. Evidently not nearly so much care and attention have been devoted to its preparation as with some of the other specimens. That the inequalities have not been caused by wear, but in process of manufacture, is proved by the state of the markings. The angles are not sharp but rounded, and it is along these the principal markings occur. There seems to be no regularity in the arrangement of the gashes—they are distributed along the four edges of the stone in fours, fives, &c., until, near the apex, from 20 to 50 short notches one under the other have been cut on each edge. At 14·5 cm. from the base a groove has been cut right round, and a number of the usual horizontal gashes are spread over the flat surfaces. The foot of the stone, although not exhibiting such extensive signs of wear as in certain other cases, has nevertheless been worn sufficiently to almost destroy the rectangular outline of the base when the object is viewed from below.

The base, diameters of which are 5·5 and 5 cm., is concave; depth in centre 6 mm.

The sketch (Pl. xv.) by Mr. R. T. Baker will give a good idea of the general appearance of this stone, which, although roughly fashioned, compared with, say, No. 1, is interesting, insomuch as it is the only specimen of the series at all approaching a rectangle in shape.

The weight of the object is 6lbs. 7ozs.

No. 3 (Pl. XIV. fig. 2) is in the South Australian Museum, Adelaide. It was discovered in 1889 at Lake Menindee, County of Menindee, west of the Darling River, N.S. Wales, and was sent to the museum with a note—"Used in certain ceremonies." It is, I think, the top part of a larger specimen, for the base is very rough and uneven, and although an attempt had been made to hollow it out this attempt was abandoned. It is composed of slate, 33 cm. in height, and is almost circular in section, the diameters of the base being 5 cm and 5·2 cm. It tapers much more gradually than the other specimens, the greatest circumference (at the base) being 16·8 cm., whilst at 5 cm. from the apex the circumference is 13·6 cm. The markings upon it are few, consisting of several rather long gashes running parallel to the base, and a number of short and, for the most part, ill-defined cuts scattered about the lower half of the object. The only other decoration is an irregular spiral incision which winds three times round the top, and thus accentuates the resemblance of the "stone" to a lingam. This mark is evidently of much more recent date than the others. The "stone," base and apex included, has been highly polished by continual handling.

Weight, 3lbs. 8ozs.

No. 4 (Pl. XVI. fig. 1) is in the Australian Museum, Sydney. Nothing is known concerning its discovery. It is composed of sandstone 36·4 cm. in length, and is almost circular in section; its greatest circumference is 23·2 cm., and the base is concave. This stone differs altogether from the others, in that it shows very evident signs of having been used rather extensively for rubbing or grinding. The stone when found was in two pieces, and it is the upper part which presents this appearance more particularly, but one side of the lower piece has also been used in a similar fashion. Dr. Cooksey, of the Australian Museum, suggested that the wear looked exactly like that noticeable on stones used for sharpening scythes, and probably some European had been using it for such a purpose. This is not unlikely. Perhaps some semi-civilised black, ignorant of its proper use, may have employed it in putting an edge on his steel tomahawk, or

even, in default of a better stone near at hand, used it for grinding seed. Be that as it may, it is evident the stone was never intended for a sharpening or grinding stone, because wherever the signs of wear exist there all traces of the decorative marks have disappeared, and the originally smooth and rounded contour of the stone has been in a measure destroyed. The marks remaining on this stone are the usual short cuts arranged in pairs.

It seems to me contrary to everything we know of our aborigines to suppose they would, for days perhaps, employ themselves in cutting out, smoothing and decorating a piece of sandstone, and then immediately set to work to destroy the shape and obliterate the decorations by using the object as a grinder.

It is worthy of notice that, as this stone is the only one of the series which has *undoubtedly* been used as a grinder of some sort, so from this one only have any of the decorations been removed, thus indicating plainly enough what would have been the appearance of the other specimens had they been so used.

Weight, 4lbs. 2ozs.

No. 5 (Pl. xvi. fig. 2) is in the Australian Museum, and was found near Ivanhoe in the County of Mossgiel, N.S.W. It is of sandstone, and very similar in shape to the preceding specimen. Its height is 41·3 cm , and the greatest circumference is 22·7 cm. In addition to a number of long and short parallel cuts scattered over the surface irregularly, a gash 14 cm. in length runs from about 6 cm. from the apex. Starting from the top of this line a number of very short and faint scratches have been made on either side of it. Then, at about equal distances from one another, appear four sets of well marked parallel gashes from 3 to 4 cm. in length on either side. Below these, and about 16 cm. from the base, is a groove which runs right round the stone. On the opposite side of the stone, and near the apex, appears a rather large "broad-arrow." In addition to this large "arrow," several smaller ones are scattered over the stone until, near the foot, we find quite a number of very small ones joined together in a perpendicular line—the point of one arrow touching the shaft of the next. The base is concave. The stone, although it was

never utilised in the same manner as No. 4, has nevertheless suffered a good deal of hard usage, and on one side shows slight signs of wear, caused possibly by rubbing along some hard surface. When found it was in three pieces, and the foot is, as usual, damaged.

The weight is 4lbs. 11½ozs.

No. 6 (Pl. xvii. fig. 1) is in the Australian Museum, Sydney, and was found between Trundle and the Lachlan River in the County of Ashburnham, N.S.W. This and the succeeding specimen are composed of an impure clay, and in this differ from the others, but in their shape, their concave bases, and the character of their markings they are analogous to them. It is 24·8 cm. in height, and the greatest circumference is 28 cm. The base is slightly concave, and marked across by a number of well-defined and clearly cut ridges radiating from a common centre. By oxidation a slight red colouring has spread over the "stone" since the marks were put on, but a scratch will remove this and disclose the almost white composition underneath. The markings are similar to those on the preceding specimens, but the "broad-arrows" are badly cut, and in some cases (this may be intentional) the barbs have been continued so as to intersect and form a cross at the end of the shaft. Occasionally only one of the barbs has been continued, and elsewhere the marks I have styled "incomplete arrows" appear. To take one view of the stone—that shown in the photograph—at the top there is an incision passing about half-way round; below this is a badly executed arrow, and then follow three more arrows (the last of which has the "cross-barbs" referred to above), one directly underneath the other, and each pointing towards the base. Parallel to this line of arrows, and on one side, is ranged a series of short deep horizontal cuts, and on the other side more arrows similarly arranged to the first series. This "stone," as usual, is chipped at the foot, and although the rather sharp ridges on the base show practically no signs of hard usage it is evident that the foot of the object was thus damaged before it was lost or cast aside, since the fractured

surface is oxidated. Several chips have been knocked out on one side since the recovery of the "stone."

Weight, 3lbs. 14½ozs.

No. 7* (Pl. XVIII. fig. 1) is in the possession of Mr. R. T. Baker, Curator of Technological Museum, Sydney, and was found 6 feet below the surface whilst sinking a tank through the red soil near Coolabah, County of Canbelego, N.S.W. It is composed of a clay similar to that of the preceding specimen, but much softer; in fact it crumbles away if rubbed with the finger, and will write upon a board very like a chalk crayon. It is almost circular in section, the diameters of the base being 5 cm. and 4·2 cm.; the height is 29·5 cm, and the greatest circumference, taken just above the worn portion (about 3·5 cm. from the base) is 18·6 cm. The base is hollowed out to a depth of 6 mm. in the centre. The concavity is smooth and regular, and, as in the case of No. 1, the signs of wear only appear on the outer edge of the ring and at the foot of the "stone." The surface of this stone has also been stained a light red by oxidation. The markings, though numerous, are all of the same nature, and occur generally in pairs. They are, as usual, unequal, ranging from 1 to 6 cm. in length, and very shallow, some of them being little more than scratches. There are 26 of the larger cuts in 13 pairs, starting at 3 cm. from the top and disposed irregularly round the "stone" to within 5 cm. from the base. In addition to the larger cuts are many small ones. Near the top are a number of these small marks ranged one under the other, not one of which exceeds 5 mm. in length. Going completely round the "stone" are 5 nearly parallel scratches. These do not occur at regular intervals, and are so faint as to be scarcely distinguishable where the surface has been abraded, although before the "stone" was coloured they were no doubt easily descernible. By continual handling the "stone" has attained quite a noticeable polish.

Weight, 2lbs. 1oz.

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* *Vide* postscript, p. 436.

The foregoing seven specimens should, I think, be classed together and considered separately from the remaining two. Although some are composed of slate, some of sandstone and some of clay, it is plain from the identity of the signs of wear at the lower ends that they were all used for the same purpose or in the same manner. Again, the bases are concave in every case, and the decorations are of the same nature and design, for no markings appear on the clay specimens which are not also present on the stone and slate, and none on the slate which are not represented on the stone and clay. In fact, treating the "incomplete arrows" (Nos. 1 and 6) and the "cross-barbs" (No. 6) as variations of the "broad-arrow," we find that, of the three stones on which both the typical markings ("broad-arrows" and horizontal or perpendicular gashes) are engraved, one is slate (No. 1), one is stone (No. 5) and one is clay (No. 7).

The similarity in decoration, in form of base, and, above all, in signs of wear, is surely sufficient evidence—in the absence of direct proofs to the contrary—that, although fashioned by different hands, of different materials, in widely separated localities—the same ideas, intentions, designs, were responsible for their existence, determined their use and regulated their construction. A good deal depends on this classification, for it is evident that a heavy piece of slate may be put to uses impossible for a piece of clay, and in endeavouring to arrive at any conclusion as to the object for which the "stones" were made, it is necessary to remember this difference of composition.

The two remaining stones differ from the preceding seven, not only in shape and in the absence of signs of the wear so noticeable on the others, but also in having even bases and practically no decorative markings. It is possible links may be later discovered connecting these with the first series, but for the present I think it better to keep them quite distinct. In this paper I propose to confine myself almost exclusively to the upright stones, but, as no satisfactory explanation has been given as to the use made of these curious curved specimens, I have thought it advisable to include photographs and descriptions of them.

No. 8 (Pl. xvii. fig. 2.) is in the Australian Museum, Sydney, and was found near the Lachlan River, N.S.W. It is large and heavy (weight, 6lbs. 9ozs.), and is composed of sandstone. The circumference at the base, which is oval, is 17·4 cm., and the greatest circumference, at about the middle of the stone where the section is much flatter, is 28·5 cm. The length from base to apex is 37·7 cm., and the height of the specimen when stood on end, in which position, by the way, it will remain unsupported, is 32·5 cm.

The markings are few. Running round the top of the stone about 12 mm. from the tip is a well-defined groove, and 3 cm. below this are two nearly parallel scratches about 4 cm. in length. The stone shows no traces of wear beyond the abrasion, consequent upon exposure to the weather, and the transference of such a heavy object from place to place. The lower end is as smooth as the upper.

No. 9 (Pl. xviii. fig. 2) is in the possession of Mr. R. T. Baker, Curator of Technological Museum, Sydney. It was found near Wilcannia, County of Young, N.S.W. It is composed of sandstone, and although more rounded than the previous specimen, oval in section, the diameters of the base being 5·8 cm. and 4·7 cm. The circumference at the base is 18·2 cm., and the greatest circumference, at about a fourth of the way up, is 22·4 cm.; the length is 35 cm., and the height 26 cm. There are no decorations upon the stone, and the base is even. The remarks as to the absence of signs of wear on preceding specimen apply also to this one.

Weight, 3lbs. 13½ozs.

Of the many theories put forward concerning the use of these stones I shall consider only three:—(1) "Stones for Grinding Seeds." (2) Ceremonial Stones. (3) Sorcerers' Stones.

(1) *Grinding Stones.*—The aboriginal mill consists of two stones—(1) a flat table (generally sandstone), oval in shape, about 2 feet long, 18 inches wide and 2 or 3 inches thick; (2) and a smaller stone which is grasped in the hand. The seeds are

placed on the table and crushed by rubbing the hand-stone backwards and forwards over them. Sometimes two hand-stones are used, one in either hand, and sometimes the grinder is given a sweeping circular motion. It is of course the hand-stones which principally concern us. These assume slightly different shapes, but this is owing to chance, for the aboriginal wastes no time in preparing them, and any stone which has one flat surface, and may be held in the hand, will suit his purpose. Specimens of grinders, smooth on both sides, circular in shape, and from 1 to 3 inches in thickness are shown in the various Museums, but, as a general rule, a large water-worn pebble or an irregular piece of sandstone, smooth on one side, is used. I have seen grinders formed by striking the end off a pebble instead of the side; this gives the stone a somewhat conical appearance, but nothing resembling the shape of the objects under consideration. The larger hand-stones have sometimes one or more hollows in the upper surface, thus affording the operator a firmer grasp. So little are the hand-stones valued by the aborigines that a woman, finding her burden too heavy, will unhesitatingly cast them aside.

Dr. Stirling says (Report Horn Exped. Vol. iv. p. 100):—"As suitable bed-stones cannot be everywhere obtained they are carried from camp to camp, often for long distances; the hand-stones, however, can be picked up anywhere, and were frequently found lying about in abandoned camps."

This style of mill is generally used also for pounding, but in some districts special stones are used as pestles and mortars. The mortar consists of a circular or oval slab of stone from 6 to 12 inches in diameter, hollowed in the centre, and is usually formed from a harder material than that employed for "grinding tables." The pestle is sometimes identical with the hand-stone I have just described, but is more frequently an oval or rounded pebble about the size of an orange, a flat base not being absolutely necessary for pounding work.

It will at once be seen what a vast difference lies between these stones and those which form the subject of this enquiry. The first are the work of an hour; the second the labour of days. The

former are most convenient mill-stones; the latter quite unsuitable. But the insuperable objection to the grinder theory is the total absence of all the signs of wear which must necessarily have appeared upon stones put to such a use.*

Stones of this shape might have been used as grinders or pounders in three different ways—(1) held by one end and rubbed backwards and forwards; (2) held by the apex in a perpendicular fashion and used as a pestle; (3) held by the apex whilst the substance to be pounded was struck at an angle.

No. 4 stone shows us what to expect if the first method had been adopted; all the markings would have been obliterated. The state of the concave, radiated or ribbed bases, proves the second impossible. The third is an attempt to explain why the signs of wear appear only at the foot of the "stones" and nowhere else.†

I believe that when we can say positively what has caused this peculiar wear, we shall have solved the mystery, and no explanation which does not account for it can be satisfactory. But surely *this* idea of its origin is far-fetched.

If the angle was at all high, the base must have suffered considerably; if at all low, then the wear must have extended much further up the stone than is actually the case.

Again, judging from the length and composition of the objects, they would probably have all broken in the middle if so used; the clay specimen (No. 7) would certainly have done so. But even supposing everything to progress happily—the proper angle always maintained, and the pounder carefully twisted so that the wear might be fairly equal all the way round—then it is still certain that the blacks would not have gone to the, comparatively speak-

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* I am not forgetful of No. 4, but the condition of the remaining eight specimens forbids our basing any theory applicable to all upon the state of this stone, which has evidently been put to uses quite foreign to those for which it was originally intended.

† Excluding the flaws and fractures at the apex of several specimens, which, in all probability, were accidental.

ing, immense labour of fashioning these "stones" merely for grinding seeds unless they possessed some special advantages over the ordinary grinders. It will be admitted that the onus of proof of these advantages lies with those ethnologists who maintain they were intended so to be used.

If, as is sometimes the case, a sheet of bark was substituted for the sandstone table, the wear would have been more gradual, but none the less sure.

This matter of wear is the most important objection to the "seed-grinder" theory, but other questions arise: Why did a woman (for grinding is a woman's duty, and hers is the task of collecting and preparing all vegetable food) choose soft clay for a hand-stone? Why are the bases concave? Why did she decorate these stones and leave her other grinders plain?

If it be suggested that they were only used by the men, upon special occasions for special purposes, grinding or otherwise, then they are no longer domestic implements, but "ceremonial stones."

The "Ceremonial Stone" theory seems to have something to recommend it. The blacks of Western N.S. Wales in the districts where most of these objects were found carved their weapons of warfare and the chase, the trees around their chief's grave, and the earth and trees of an initiation ground,* but why did they carve these stones? Idle fancy could not have guided their hands, for here are nine specimens, found hundreds of miles apart, all exhibiting similar features. Besides, a black might cut gashes in a tree trunk just to try his new hatchet, or he might daub grotesque designs on the roof of a cave merely for amusement, but he will not laboriously carve out and decorate a solid block of slate or sandstone for nothing; or if one eccentric individual would do so, half-a-dozen would not be guilty of the same waste of energy.

These "stones" are certainly not weapons; their markings prove they have nothing in common with memorial trees; then

* The rock carvings of the Eastern Coast are, I believe, altogether absent from Western N.S.W.

may they not have been used in some ceremony—not necessarily the "Bora"? The difference in composition would of course not militate against this theory. Again, if they are ceremonial stones, then it is certain they must have been used for similar ceremonies. The wide area over which they were found does not prohibit this, for other ceremonies, such as "circumcision" or "rainmaking" extend much farther.

Gason* writes of many ceremonies (food-producing, &c.) practised by the Cooper's Creek tribe. Is it not possible that, although traces of them no longer exist, similar ceremonies were once known in Western N.S.W.? The aboriginal spares no pains and will go to infinite trouble in the preparation of the paraphernalia necessary for the successful issue of any of his sacred rites, and would never hesitate to carve a stone for such a purpose. But it is useless for us to call the objects "ceremonial stones" unless we can indicate what ceremony they were used for, and explain in what way they were used, so as to cause the wearing and fractures at the foot of each.

The markings, if merely decorative, as I believe they are, will not help us much; the "emu-tracks" or "broad-arrows" present on three of the specimens are common decorations of N.S.W. initiation grounds, and that is all we can say.†

Phallic Emblems.—One theory which may be said to suggest itself is that they are phallic emblems. This opinion, as far as I know, has nothing to recommend it except the shape of the "stones." It is only to be expected that amongst a people so low in the scale of civilisation as the Australians, the male and female organs should attract a good deal of attention, but that

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* Native Tribes of S. Aust. p. 267, *et seq.*

† One enthusiastic supporter of the "ceremonial" theory professes to be able to trace a design in the markings on No. 1 "stone." He says the "broad-arrows" represent emus, the "incomplete arrows" boomerangs, the long straight gashes are spears, and the "star" is symbolical of a group of emus in a scrub which is represented by the smaller scratches; that, in fact, the "stone" is a picture of an emu hunt.

anything of the nature of true phallic worship was ever known amongst our blacks, I am disinclined to believe. References to the yoni and lingam are very frequent in their stories and corroborees; several practices at the initiation ceremonies and in the healing of the sick have probably a phallic significance, but these are owing either to an indulgence of their brute appetites or to a recognition of the importance of the generative organs; the element of worship is entirely lacking. Several other objections may suggest themselves—such as the wear at the foot, the concave bases, the markings, &c., but after all the principal objection is that this theory is opposed to all we at present know of the genius of the Australian aborigines; and unless some better excuse for styling the "stones" phallic "emblems" than that furnished by their shape can be found, we are not justified in considering them as such.*

A sort of compromise between the "pounder" and "ceremonial" theories is that the "stones" formed part of the stock-in-trade of an aboriginal "koradjie"—sorcerer—wizard. I have myself heard it stated, and it is not impossible, that in the preparation of "charms," &c., the sorcerer used a special kind of pounder. That this pounder should differ very much from those ordinarily in use is to be expected, and from what we know of these men the desire for novelty—something "out of the way"—would overcome all the evident objections on account of inconvenience or unsuitability. The markings would be decorative. But even supposing we allow that, if used only occasionally on the softest substances and with extreme care, the signs of wear would not be more noticeable than they actually are, still, is it a fact that sorcerers did use such pounders? What were the constituents of the substance pounded? If they were fat, oil and refuse, as is usually the case, why do not the softer stones show the signs

* James Bonwick in "The Daily Life of the Tasmanians," p. 195, mentions several native customs possibly phallic in their origin, but I very much doubt whether he is right in claiming the "broad-arrow" as a phallic symbol in Australia.

thereof? And why employ a pounder weighing 4 or 5 lbs. for such work?

The two other suggestions I have already referred to, viz., "Tombstones" and "Records of the Dead," have so many serious objections against and (as far as I have been able to learn) nothing in favour of them, that it would be useless for me to do more than mention them here. If it be thought that the same remark would apply equally to certain of the other theories examined, then my excuse is that the character of the stones is brought out more distinctly by such an examination than by a simple descriptive catalogue.

Finally, authorities are divided as to whether they are "pounders" or "ceremonial stones"; in the state of our present knowledge we may style them either the one or the other. This is very unsatisfactory, and it must be the hope of every Australian ethnologist that the question will hereafter be definitely settled.

Editorial Postscript—Stone No. 7 (*antea*, p. 428) was exhibited at the Society's Meeting of September 26th, 1888. By an oversight the notice of the exhibit does not appear in the Proceedings for 1888, but it is thus referred to in the Abstract of the date mentioned :—

"Mr. Maiden exhibited, on behalf of the Rev. J. Milne Curran, an aboriginal relic or implement of undetermined character, found a few months ago in sinking a tank at Byrock, N.S.W., at a depth of 7 feet. It is of argillaceous sandstone, carrot-shaped, about $11\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{4}$ inches, the broad extremity concave, the surface marked transversely at intervals with lines of which there are five pairs on one side and three pairs on the other. Blackfellows to whom it had been shown could give no information about it; nor had anyone who had yet seen it been able to recognise its import."*

* "On comparing the specimen with an implement exhibited on behalf of Mr. C. S. Wilkinson, at the Society's Meeting of 25th June, 1884 (*vide* Proceedings, Vol. ix., p. 507), it is evident that the two are of a similar character, differing but little except in regard to size and in the details of the pairs of transverse markings."